Erotic Irony

And Mythic Forms in the Art of Thomas Mann

Joseph Campbell

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I

In the year 1936 somebody in Vienna made a monumental mistake and invited Thomas Mann to deliver a festival address honoring the eightieth birthday of Sigmund Freud. How it could have been supposed that an artist would talk long about anyone or anything but himself and his work, I cannot imagine; and the interesting thing is that Mann expressed his own bewilderment in his first sentence. Why, he asked, should an artist, a maker, have been chosen to speak of a scientist, a knower? "An author," he declared, "is a man essentially not bent upon science, upon knowing, distinguishing and analyzing; he stands for simple creation, for doing and making, and thus may be the *object* of useful cognition without by his very nature having any competence in it as *subject*." However, the great speaker then suggested, perhaps those who had made this selection had had in mind a festival—a Saturnalia, where the object becomes subject, and the subject the object; or to use again Mann's own turn of phrase: where "the knower and seer of dreams becomes himself, by our act of homage, the object of dreamlike penetration."

Now in the festival of the Roman Saturnalia social tables were reversed: masters served their slaves, and a mock king was appointed who could break rules as he pleased. A slave might insult his master, railing at him as he liked, and not even a word of reproof would be uttered for conduct that at any other season would be rewarded with a beating, imprisonment, or even death. Thus in Mann's mention of the Saturnalia there was a threat implicit of carnival-like lese majesty, which might not be altogether gentle. Indeed, in the term "useful cognition" itself there was already implied a certain depreciation (from the artist's point of view) of the psychoanalyst's approach to the reading of life's dream. And since Eros, "love," had long been a dominant theme in the writings no less of Thomas Mann than of Sigmund Freud, the celebrants at that birthday festival might have taken warning, that moment, that they were about to give audience to a not quite orthodox commentary on the science of their master.

Freud's own thoughts about art and artists were already well known to Mann, no less than to everyone else in that room, and they were certainly not Mann's own. They had been stated on many occasions, and most sharply, sixteen years before, in a lecture on "The Paths of Symptom-Formation" that had been published as Lecture Twenty-three of Freud's *General Introduction to Psychoanalysis.* There we find the artist diagnosed (from the point of view of "useful cognition") as one who desires intensely "honor, power, riches, fame, and the love of women," but lacks the means to attain them. Frustrated, he becomes introverted and turns with unsatisfied longing from reality to fantasizing—which, in the Freudian view, is always unconsciously predetermined by repressed infantile fears and desires. Since the artist, however, is gifted with what Freud in this passage terms the "mysterious ability" to reproduce his daydreams in such a way as to afford satisfaction to other frustrated souls, he earns their gratitude and admiration, and (to quote): "has won thus *through* his fantasy what before he could win only *in* fantasy, namely, honor, power, and the love of women."

Thus the present artist, Thomas Mann, it would appear, had made such progress *through* his fantasy toward the winning at least of honor that he had been designated to pronounce the eulogy at Dr. Freud's eightieth birthday. However, as already remarked: of more interest than Freud to this particular artist were himself and his own great works.

In a fifteen-page edition of Mann's encomium hardly four pages go to Freud; the rest, to himself and those nineteenth-century authors by whom his own works had been chiefly inspired. Mann, at the time, was 61; at the peak of his creative career. He had just published Volume III of his magnificent *Joseph* tetralogy. And the year was 1936: two years later came the *Anschluss*, Hitler annexing Austria. Freud took flight to London, to complete there his final works, and Mann, very shortly after, moved to Switzerland, then England, and finally, Hollywood. The terminal volume of his *Joseph* series had to wait to appear until 1943, and in the meantime there were published from his hand, not only a number of political tracts urging Americans into the war for what he termed "The Coming Victory of Democracy," but also two remarkable novels: one, a really beautiful thing treating of Goethe in his old age, *The Beloved Returns* (German, *Lotte in Weimar*), and the other, an amusing fantasy, *The Transposed Heads*, on a grotesque Hindu theme with which Mann had become acquainted from the writings of the great indologist (and close friend of C. G. Jung) Dr. Heinrich Zimmer.

Now on entering into his festival speech, directly following the announcement of his Saturnalia theme, Thomas Mann gave praise to Freud as a courageous, mighty spirit, who had trodden independently and alone, as physician and natural scientist, the very steep and difficult path of his researches, in total ignorance of the fact that all of the essential ideas of the new branch of science he was founding had already been put forward by those great German romantics with whose writings Mann himself had been familiar since early youth. Dr. Freud had not—said Mann—known Nietzsche, who had already recognized that the leading themes, ideas, and images of philosophy, mythology, and religion are psychologically grounded, the best method of exploring the psyche being through a study of disease. Freud had never read Novalis, "whose romantic-biologic fantasies," in Mann's words, "so often approach astonishingly close to analytic conceptions." Nor had he read Kierkegaard. He knew nothing of Ibsen, who had shown that the lie—and little lies—of life are absolutely necessary in the interests of survival. And he had not read Schopenhauer, in whose *World as Will and Idea* the whole Freudian theme of the conflict of *id* and *ego* is already thoroughly worked out.

Mann went on, then, to announce that Freud had come to *him*, not *he* to *Freud*—and rather late in his career, at that. Freud had been brought to his attention by a number of young scholars who were carrying his ideas into the fields of literature, history of art, religion and pre-history; "and when," said Mann, "I began to occupy myself with the literature of psychoanalysis, I recognized, arrayed in the ideas and language of scientific exactitude, much that had long been familiar to me through my own youthful experiences."

"Perhaps," he then said, "you will kindly permit me to continue for a while in this autobiographical strain, and not take it amiss if instead of speaking of Freud, I speak now of myself." Which, indeed, he proceeded to do for the best part of the remainder of his hour.

Mann reminded the festival gathering of his early novelette, *Little Herr Friedmann*, which he had published when but twenty-two, in 1897, three years before Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*. No one present, knowing that story, would have failed to recognize, anticipated here, Freud's whole theory, not only of the unconscious, but also of art as a compensation—with, however, the understanding (represented in Nietzsche and Ibsen) that the lies by which men live can be life-fostering and life-furthering, often indeed painfully conscious and heroic, and that the blasting of them with the banal light of an obvious truth (as in Ibsen's play, *The Wild Duck*) may not be a service to life, but a cruel prank.

Little Herr Friedmann is the tale of a sensitive little cripple, who, as an infant, had been dropped by the nurse and critically hurt. He had grown up a tiny hunchback. Unable to participate in the sports and love games of his peers, he had bravely swallowed his humiliation and taught himself with infinite care to take pleasure in what life—which he loved—still could offer: a walk in the park in springtime, the song of a bird or the fragrance of a blossom. He read books, practiced the violin, and was interested in the theater. "Is not life in and for itself a good," he reasoned, "regardless of whether we may call its content 'happiness'?"

There came, however, a day when he beheld, then met, and finally conversed with the extraordinarily beautiful wife of a distinguished government official, the first sight of whom had struck him to the heart. His breathing stopped. He turned away; and there came from his soul the cry, "Mein Gott! Mein Gott!" At an evening garden party she compassionately invited him for a chat by the riverside, and when they had settled on a garden bench, "How long," she asked, "have you had your infirmity, Herr Friedmann? Were you born with it?"

He explained.

"And how old are you now?"

He was thirty.

"Thirty years," she repeated thoughtfully. "And those years were not happy years?"

He bowed, shook his head, his lips began to quiver. "No," he answered, "that was all lies and imagination."

"You thought yourself happy?" she asked.

"I tried to be," he answered.

"That was brave of you," she commented; and with that he went to pieces.

A hideous seizure of helpless, hopeless, clinging desperation overtook him; and when she, with a sudden impulse of loathing, tossed him from her, rose and departed, he rolled to the ground in agony, dragged his poor little shape to the moonsparkling water's edge—which waters he had seen reflected in her eyes—let his face and shoulders drop into the stream, and so remained.

Well, having mentioned that early novelette, in which an astonishing number of the leading themes and motifs of his later writings were already announced, Mann proceeded in his Saturnalian play to a discussion of Schopenhauer and the contribution of that philosopher's thinking to his own—as represented in his first long novel, *Buddenbrooks*, which he completed in 1900 (the year of Freud's first masterwork) and published, 1902. Schopenhauer's characterization of the Will, Mann pointed out, as a blind, metaphysically grounded, general impulsion informing all of nature, shifted the accent of philosophy from rational idealism to a recognition of the primacy of instinct over reason in the psyche. All thinking in this view (as later, in Freud's) responds to subliminal urgencies which are the actual determinants of our lives, the conscious ego being only provisionally competent to formulate and realize aims of its own. Mann compares this relationship to that of Europe to Asia: Europe, the province of the intellect and developed rational thinking; Asia of the unconscious. He again compares it—using a well known mythic figure—to that of a rider and his mount: the mount, the power of the will in nature; the rider, guiding, reasoning mind. And in this connection he brings forward in his talk his first overt contradiction of Freud, reproaching him for his mistrust of the mount. For the steed may at times know better than its rider, and the best thing then is to let the mount (the wisdom of nature) bear one on.

This had long been a leading theme, not only of Thomas Mann, but also of German literature generally. Already, for example, in the early thirteenth-century *Parzival* of Wolfram von Eschenbach, it was only when the young Grail Knight let his reins lie slack on his powerful charger's neck that he was carried on his proper course. Such a basic trust—even to the length, sometimes, of letting nature tide one along in a perilous way dangerous to reason, morality, and possibly even to life—is opposed altogether to Freud's leading thesis, which he once epitomized in the sentence: "Where there is *id* there shall be *ego*." In Mann, on the contrary, there is very much of *id*, even though much, also, of *ego*. The two are not opposed, as in Freud, but complementary. And this conduces in the novelist's work to a quality of irony that is as different as can be from the deliberately "useful cognitions" of the medical man—who by profession, of course, is more strictly committed than the artist to what his intellect tells him is health. In fact, there is implied in the reckless turning over of the reins of prudence to nature a certain dubious strain of what Thomas Mann has called a "sympathy with death": as there was, for example, in Herr Friedmann's daring to sit alone with the unachievable woman who had already undone his peace of mind.

But, paradoxically, there is a death of opposite kind in store for those who would protect themselves from such a waking; and that is the leading lesson of *Buddenbrooks*—which Mann wrote, by the way, before he reached twenty-five. It is a tale of the psychological disorientation of a nineteenth-century North German business family, paralleling in its course the decline generally in Central Europe of the old conservative burgher class and the rise of a new-rich bourgeoisie. We are introduced to four generations, losing progressively their courage for adventure, each of the members of generation three—Thomas, Christian, and Tony (their sister)—sacrificing in the name of loyalty to the firm every youthful impulse to an individual life. And all lose thereby not only their feeling for life but also, disastrously, their heritage of feeling for success. They make one wrong decision after another, until Thomas, the eldest, increasingly conscious of the onerous weight of his duties and the unlikelihood of anything ever again coming off as it should, finally knows, one day, that all is lost. The firm is in desperate case, misjudgments having all but wrecked it; and his only child, little Hanno, sickly, deeply afraid, sensitive, and with a gift for the arts but no will to pursue the disciplines, has no will to live and will shortly die. The moment has come (that is to say) that has come to many a good father in our time, of realizing that what he had lived and toiled for had been (to quote again little Herr Friedmann) "all lies and imagination."

Thomas, however, does not drown himself. Instead, he one day chances on a copy of Schopenhauer's *World as Will and Idea*, and there learns that we are all embodiments of one universal Will and that our true being, moreover, is not in our temporal physical bodies, but in our metaphysical unity in that Will. He had been thinking of immortality only in temporal terms, as a continuation into future; and of his own immortality in social terms, as pertaining somehow to the family, to be passed on through a son. From Schopenhauer, however, he now learns of eternity as a presence, here and now, some kind of universal ground.

The chapter to which he had opened bore the title, "On Death, and

Its Relation to the Indestructibility of our True Being," and when he closed the book he felt himself to have been both deepened and expanded. Filled with the sense of a strange, sweet, vague allurement that reproduced somehow the feelings of early love, he that night slept more prodigiously than ever before in his life—to wake next morning sobbing, after what he immediately knew had been a wisdom-dream.

"I shall live!" he thought; "for *It* lives and I am *It*, living now and forever in all beings." And with that, from that time on, his brief remaining days were penetrated, consoled and pacified by a deep "sympathy with death" and willingness to let go.

Discussing Schopenhauer in his birthday-lecture, Mann made a special point of his appreciation of an essay of the philosopher entitled, *Transcendental Speculations on an Apparent Intention in the Fate of the Individual*, where Schopenhauer remarks that when, toward the close of a lifetime, one looks back, reviewing its course, it frequently appears that occurrences that seemed at the time to have been of mere chance, actually became essential factors in a life-plot as consistent as that of a novel: the author in this case having been one's own unconscious self. Yet how could you or I be the cause of those accidents, "acts of God" and so on, that break into our lives from outside? Schopenhauer in reply suggests the analogy of dream. In dream one is surprised by what occurs; yet actually it is our unconscious will that is the author and producer. Likewise, an unconscious will is the author of our lives: a great common will (the World as Will), which ultimately is what lives and moves in us all. We are, as it were, states Schopenhauer, figures in the field of a universal dream, dreamed, as it were, by a single dreamer, in which all the dream characters dream too—so that everything "interlocks and harmonizes with everything else"; which is an idea of dream, very different from that of Freud: an ancient mythological idea, in fact, already represented, for example, in the Hindu image of the god Vishnu asleep on the waters of the cosmic ocean, dreaming the dream of the universe. Shakespeare's Spanish contemporary Calderón wrote a play, *La Vida es Sueño*, "Life is a Dream," and the Bard himself, in *The Tempest*, states in the words of his wizard, Prospero:

> "We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on, and our little life
> Is rounded in a sleep."

Laurens van der Post, in *The Heart of the Hunter*, quotes a Kalahari

Bushman as having said to him, "There is a dream dreaming us." Such a thought is the founding inspiration of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, and we have it again in Wordsworth's famous line: "Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting."

Such poetic, metaphysical thoughts are symbolic intimations of the mystery that is the mystery of our own and the world's very being; and they are common to the human species: not "personal," but "archetypal" (in Jung's sense) and, as such, not of the Freudian "personal unconscious," but of a common, "general unconscious" of the human race.

A metaphysical shift of accent of this kind from the light-world intellect and personality tends to inspire not only that "sympathy with death" of which Mann was so keenly aware, but also a certain ambiguity in loyalty and judgment, of which he was also aware. One no longer defends one's life with such conviction as before; nor its values, aims, and ideals. One is caught in a balance between duties to ethical values and this deeper darker pull to an undefined abyss: the rapture of letting oneself melt away, as it were, into a sea.

Mann associates such an allure with the philosophies of Asia, the force of the Freudian *id*, and the rapture of music—especially Wagner's perfumed sea of sound. And he balances against all these the values of ego, the rational intellect, social duties, integrity of character, and what, in his celebration of Freud, he had referred to as "useful cognition."

Now one of the very great influences on Wagner's art was the philosophy of Schopenhauer, and during the years of Thomas Mann's growing up Wagner's operas were the great new thing in the world. The composer himself in his autobiography tells of the overwhelming effect upon him of his first reading of *The World as Will and Idea*; and Thomas Mann, in turn, describes in a number of passages the influence of Wagner's art on his own. Schopenhauer had likened the appeal of music to the force of the Will in nature, and Wagner, seizing upon this thought, conceived the music of his operas to represent the motivation of his characters. Mann, continuing in this vein, thought of the musicality of his prose (not always evident in translation) as suffusing with life the meticulously described details of his narrative.

There is a beautiful essay by Schopenhauer on *The Foundation of Morality* in which he asks the following question: How is it that one human being can experience the pain and danger of another as though it were his own, and to such a degree that he will forget himself and putting his own life in jeopardy, go spontaneously to that other's rescue? Schopenhauer's answer is that such an act occurs because that other is in truth oneself, the notion of a separate ego served in the field of space-time by "useful cognition" being secondary only. You and I are in substance one, objectifications of the one Will, and in the experience of compassion (*Mitleid*) this truth is immediately recognized. In Schopenhauer's own words:

"As soon as this sentiment of compassion is aroused the weal and woe of another comes to lie directly on my heart in exactly the same way—though not always to the same degree—as otherwise only my own would lie, and therewith the difference between him and me is absolute no longer. And this surely is amazing—even mysterious. It is, in fact, the great mystery inherent in all morality, the prime integrant of ethics, and a gate beyond which the only type of speculation that can presume to venture a single step must be metaphysical."

Now right here, I would say, is the key, the nugget-thought and founding realization of the principle of irony in the novels of Thomas Mann. For although, as Schopenhauer maintains, this impulse of compassion is the basis of all morality, it is equally a basis of what must appear to the world to be immorality, since, like God, it makes no distinction between good and evil. According to the Gospel: the Father makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, sends rain on the just and on the unjust: judge not that ye may not be judged. Normally we think of ethics as a function of the principle of judgment, supporting right against wrong, good against evil, truth against falsehood, fair against foul, whereas here is a teaching that would know morality rather as a function of the principle of mercy. There is a word of Paul to the Romans in which this mystery is epitomized (and which supplied James Joyce, by the way, with the motto of his *Finnnegans Wake*): "For God has consigned all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all." The very act of living is an affirmation of what is false—the illusion of separateness and distinction; and where this illusion is so recognized, there may follow a denial of the will to live: Hamlet's question, "To be or not to be. . ."; Mann's theme of the "sympathy with death"; the "love-death" theme, *mild and leise*, of Wagner's Tristan and Isolde; and more brutally, Calvin's doctrine of the "total depravity" of human nature.

The most forceful, thoroughgoing answer to such a baffled, guilt-ridden posture of negation is that, of course, of Nietzsche's ironic affirmation of life in all its ambiguity; and Mann immediately following his completion of *Buddenbrooks*, moved ahead to this in his next story, *Tonio Kroeger*, which appeared in 1903: and as he has himself declared of this work, it was here that he truly found himself and the philosophy proper to his art.

The youthful hero, Tonio Kroeger, whose name already tells of the mixture in him of two worlds—the North German of his father and the Latin of his mother—found himself set apart temperamentally as well as in appearance from his blue-eyed blond companions, and accordingly, on coming of age, left his northern home to fashion for himself in a city of the South a destiny of his own among others who, like himself, would have "dropped out" into a "Hippieville" of intellect and art—or, as it was termed in those days, Bohemia. The inhabitants were of two orders: first, those frightened by life, who, like Schopenhauer, had intuitively penetrated the veil of phenomenality and were wallowing now in Bunyan's "Slough of Despond," spiritual paralysis, existentialist "nausea," and sympathy with death; and then those, more like the majority of our current college "intellectuals," who had set up in their heads an ideal for human life and conduct to which no living thing had ever in the history of the human race conformed, and from the prospects of that unassailable tower of thought were demolishing with volleys of rhetoric every earthly institution and personage of public trust within reach of their winged words. Both were types of what Nietzsche had called "Decadents," people with little talent for life: girls who fell down when they danced and chaps who, like Tonio, had felt, one way or another, isolated, special, and apart—the very types, in short, that Freud was to characterize as "artists." Their motivation was self-defensive resentment, and the whole sense of their relentless talk, disparagement.

Tonio, however, soon found himself no more at ease among such critics of the commonality of the human race than he had formerly felt among the objects of their scorn; for although he had himself departed from the burgher world, he had not departed in resentment. Like little Herr Friedmann, he loved life, and he had even loved those handsome blue-eyed blonds among whom he had been a stranger—particularly a certain charming Hans and beautiful Ingeborg, to whom he had secretly pledged his heart. He presently realized, therefore, with a melancholy pang, that he was at home neither here nor there: a "lost burgher," as he termed himself, "between two worlds," that of people who could act without thinking, and this of critics who could think but not do very much.

Now he had become acquainted in his southern refuge (which I think must have been Munich) with a young Russian woman, Lisaveta by name; and when he had quit her circle he sent back to her a letter setting forth his credo as an artist.

The right word, *le mot juste*, he had recognized, wounds and can even kill; yet the duty of the writer must be, to name and to name exactly. But what chiefly have to be named in a person are his imperfections, since in human life perfection does not exist. Perfection is cold, impersonal, finally uninteresting. (All the Buddhas, they say, are alike. Having gained release from the imperfections of this world, they have left it, never to return.) Accordingly, what makes a person lovable are precisely his imperfections and what the "right word" names as an imperfection is exactly what is to be loved. The arrow of judgment, then, is to fly to its mark with a balm on its point of compassion; for the function of art is not annihilation, but celebration.

"I admire," wrote Tonio Kroeger to his intellectual friend, "those proud and cold creatures who adventure on paths of great daemonic beauty and despise 'mankind': but I do not envy them; for if there is anything capable of making a poet of a literary man, it is this burgher-like love that I feel for the human, the commonplace and what is alive. All warmth derives from this, all goodness and all humor; and to me it even seems that this must be that very love of which it has been written that though I speak with the tongue of men and of angels, if I have not this, I am as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. . . ."

"Erotic" or "plastic irony" is the name that Thomas Mann gave to this principle. It is basically a Nietzschean principle, recognizing first with Schopenhauer the inherent fault and injustice in every act of life, but then, with a courageous leap of faith, so to say, affirming all with a resounding yea. And it was this profoundly compassionate, while equally ruthless, manner of seeing and naming that supported Mann, giving life to his art, throughout the better part of his career.

II

Now it appeared to me, when considering this talk, that its principal aim should be to show how this guiding principle of "erotic" or "plastic irony" opened out in Mann's later writings to an extraordinarily rich appreciation and creative utilization of traditional mythic themes; and it seemed to me that I might do this best by reviewing the main lines and themes of his great novel, *The Magic Mountain*. This is a work that appeared in 1924, just two years following Joyce's *Ulysses*. The two men had developed independently, Joyce from an Irish Catholic background, Mann from a German Protestant. And it seems to me a matter of the greatest literary interest that these two paramount authors of the first decades of our century moved in their development, stage by stage in equal pace, along parallel courses—from the late nineteenth-century manner of the naturalistic novel, through the mythologically suggestive, only apparently naturalistic stage of *Ulysses* and *The Magic Mountain*, on to the frankly mythological final masterworks of *Finnegans Wake* (1938) and the *Joseph* novels (1934-44).

Mann himself informs us that the inspiration that in time developed into the novel of *The Magic Mountain* first occurred to him in 1912, when with his wife he went for a visit of three weeks to a sanatorium in Davos, Switzerland. The idea that occurred to him there, as he tells, was to place a young man of somewhat delicate health and disposition between two questionable pedagogues in just such a morally dangerous environment. But he had hardly begun to develop this thought when along came the First World War, and for the next three or four years he remained emotionally caught in a great tangle of social-historical problems and analyses: of conservatism vs. progressivism, Germany vs. France and England, and again following the lead of Nietzsche, what sickness it was, of the European soul, that in this total war had broken to the surface. Now from this side, now from that, he reviewed and resolved these unresolvable questions, and in a great, tumultuous sea of a book that has never been translated, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* ("Observations of a Non-Political Man"), brought his ruminations forward at the close of the War. In *The Magic Mountain* they are brought forward again, but in a balanced, harmonized, orderly way, attached ironically to that earlier thought of the two questionable pedagogues and morally dangerous environment—with a young German marine-engineer as hero, and the setting, of course, the same international sanatorium that he had visited, 1912, in the Alps.

The novel is in two volumes. The first tells of the arrival of its hero, Hans Castrop, in the Davos sanatorium Berghof, "Mountain Court," for a visit of three weeks with his cousin, a young army officer named Joachim: but where he was actually to spend seven years. Volume I, that is to say, is the tale of his relaxation to, and acquiescence in, a really dangerous adventure, and Volume II then deals with his analysis, interpretation, and creative assimilation of the realizations gained, concerning disease and death, life and lust, love, society, nature and the nature of man, as well as, of course, himself.

The visit had been suggested by his doctor, not because of any hint of illness, but simply for a change of air. He was not strong and his work was getting a little on his nerves. It was exacting. He respected it. But he enjoyed much more his holidays and the luxury of relaxing with a Maria Mancini cigar.

And so it was with considerable expectation that he boarded, one midsummer day, a train from the "flatland" of his daily tasks to the beautiful Swiss vacation-land, transferring there to one of those marvelous little toylike trains that go winding up incredible heights, up, and then up still more—leaving behind, at last, the deciduous trees that annually shed their leaves and so mark the years and the seasons, entering a region of eternal snows and unchanging evergreens. He had passed from time to a kind of eternity: a region, furthermore, of such rarified air that his heart was beating like crazy when he arrived, and he was excited, like a lover about to be blessed.

Already his body, that is to say, has gotten ahead of him and is leading his spirit—which is already the announcement of death and beginning of disintegration. When he steps from the little train he is greeted by his charming cousin: fresh, athletic, tanned, and looking so full of life! yet sick actually unto death. In other words, the arriving hero is being greeted here, in this land of the living dead, by King Death himself, wearing the mask of Life. And his educator here, for the next seven years, will be exactly this mythological figure, along with his consort, Lady Lust.

Death and disease, Lust and lechery, as educators, disintegrators and transformers that tear apart programs and intentions, the mind as well as the body, and carry one away on a wild vertiginous adventure!

The room in the sanatorium to which Hans found himself assigned, and in which he thought he would spend three weeks, bore the number 34, which was already a prophecy of what awaited him. For three plus four is seven—seven years. Seven also is the number of those visible spheres (Moon, Mercury, and Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn) by which the soul ascends to heaven, from earthly to eternal wisdom. It is the number, furthermore, of time (Past, Present, Future) plus space (North, South, East, and West), and so, of the Universe, totality. Thus we have started already with a magical note, not exactly proper to a good, old, down-to-earth, naturalistic novel.

The bed in that room, into which Hans, our hero, collapses at the end of his first exciting day, had been the deathbed, just before, of an American girl; so that, in falling asleep he is joined with her in mystic marriage, as it were, in the night of death, and in dreaming, picks up, so to say, where she left off. Suggested, also, in this image is the mythological androgyne motif. One thinks of Tiresias, for example, whom Odysseus found in the Underworld, who in life had been magically turned into a female and, after a spell of seven years, back into his male form again.

Now the guiding measure of Hansen's stay in the mountain is to be his body-temperature as registered by the mercury of a thermometer. Mercury, the god, is the Roman counterpart of Greek Hermes (Egyptian Thot), the guide of souls to the Underworld and, through death and corruption, to rebirth in eternal life. Mercurius in alchemy, furthermore, is the power that transmutes base matter into gold; and in order to be in this way transmuted, the raw material has to be *hermetically* sealed in a retort: sealed away by the god Hermes from all influences of the common world, so that the feverish processes of interior transformation may proceed according to internal laws without outside interruption. Thomas Mann has likened such an ideal of education, which he terms "hermetic pedagogy," to this figure of the alchemist's retort; and, I would say, it is just the opposite to that kind of education which has become fashionable lately on our campuses. Not the hue and cry of the moment, but the influences of perennial themes, the arts, philosophies, and sciences, are to be allowed to work for a time unhindered on the spirit, according to this reasoning. However, not all are in a condition of readiness for such influences. Not all on the Magic Mountain were, like Hans, in a condition, so to say, of spiritual pregnancy. Three, by the way, is an active, masculine number; four, a passive feminine; so that already in the number of his room, 34, success in the adventure is foretold.

Well, when our mystic bridegroom, aged 23, woke the following morning and had shaved, he went out onto his balcony and, viewing the picturesque mountain-scene of eternal snows and peaks, heard strains of a music being somewhere played. He loved music and, when listening, would make his music-listening face: abstracted, stupid, sleepy, and pious. Below, in the garden, there was an old woman walking, deathly pale, in black: a Mexican, as Hans later learned, who had just lost, up here, her two sons. And as she walked, she was keeping time unconsciously to the music. Hans returned to his room, where, through the wall, he now heard from the room next door sounds of a wrestling, giggling and panting, that brought to his countenance a flush which, very curiously, never left it again the whole period of his stay.

His cousin Joachim arrived to conduct him down to breakfast, and in the dining room, while meeting, greeting, and learning to know the other members of his table, he was rudely jarred and irritated when someone, entering, let the door slam, bang! right behind him. "Pfui!" he thought "What kind of slob is that?" But he was held in conversation, unable to turn.

Then he was introduced to the two governing doctors: Behrens in a long white surgeon's coat, and Krakowski, the psychologist, in a smock of shiny black. White and black, these two, a brother-pair, like Minos and Rhademanthys, judges of the dead in the afterworld, were highly questionable fellows, unhealthy-looking shepherds, hosts and entertainers of a questionable flock.

Next, our adventuring innocent, of delicate health and disposition, meets in this morally dangerous palace of Death the first of those two pedagogues whom Thomas Mann had had in mind when first conceiving this symbolic work. Appearing at the opening of a chapter entitled "Satana," he is Mann's counterpart of Goethe's Mephistopheles: an Italian, Settembrini, moderately tall, attractive with his black moustache, first seen by Hans standing in an easy posture, leaning on his cane with his legs crossed. He is a writer of political tracts, a theoretical humanist and social disciplinarian, instinctively interested in capturing people's souls. He will be unstinting in instruction, companionship and advice, his politics of the order that used to be known as "Liberal." Not Marx and Engels, but Garibaldi, Carducci and Mazzini, and before them, the eighteenth-century rhetoricians of the rights of man, were his models and antecedents. His immediate advice to Hans, very shortly after meeting him, was to quit this mountain resort of corruption right away, before it trapped him, and to return to his social duties at home. Hans, however, saw him rather as one of those bowing, smiling, Italian hand-organ men who used to be seen on the streets grinding out familiar tunes, with an amusing little monkey on a string who would take your pennies in his little black hand and tip to you his little cap. Like his neatly kept ideas, his black and white checked trousers, a bit old and a bit threadworn, were always neatly pressed. And he was certainly civilized: there was no question about that.

But the startling carnival atmosphere of this Saturnalian health resort had already caught the young visitor's fancy. His cheeks were already flushed. And the way he would burst out laughing at every odd grimace of King Death gave notice that his character was unraveling. As Mann himself has pointed out, Death appears in this book as a comic figure. Hans had arrived with a lot of romantic feelings of piety before death and about the special dignity of the sick, whereas here he soon learns of a club of jolly "half-lungers." Others, with punctured lungs, would lewdly whistle at him through the puncture. The dead were sent flying downhill on bobsleds. Death the Clown, as educator, was upsetting all his ideas. Moreover, Settembrini, with his Latin eye for the girls, had his own way of regarding the goings-on of this land of the walking dead. "Look" he would whisper as Krakowski passed by. "There he goes and knows all our women's secrets. He has only one idea in his head, and that's a dirty one."

Then it happened—in the dining hall: the door slammed again—at the fish course; and Hans turned in anger, to see.

Now the fish, you must know, is an animal sacred to Aphrodite. One eats fish on Friday, "Venus's Day." And we have also to remember that Christ, symbolized in early Christian art in the figure of the fish, was crucified on a Friday, immolated in love. The door slammed at the fish course. Hans turned—and there she was; and he was hooked.

A young woman of middle stature was gliding on her way to the Russian table with her red-blond hair wound simply about her head in braids. We think of Circe of the Braided Locks. And she moved without a sound, in wonderful contrast to the noise of her entrance, her head a little thrust forward, one hand in the pocket of a close-fitting white woollen sweater and the other, raised to the back of her head, supporting and ordering her hair. Her name was Clavdia, Clavdia Chauchat; and that evening there was a touch of blood on Hans' handkerchief.

He was now not only psychologically hooked, but actually in physical danger, and the remaining chapters of this volume will treat of his separation from Settembrini's control and passage, fatefully, irresistibly, into Clavdia's keep and spell, Mann's model for the stages and symbolism of this transit being Part II, Act II, of Goethe's *Faust:* that marvelous passage known as the "Classical Walpurgisnight," where Faust, desiring Helen of Troy—who can be found only in Persephone's realm, the Classical land of the dead—flies on a magic carpet with the aid of Mephistopheles to a carnival scene of the ancient gods, there to unite with her in marriage. I am not going to review these scenes in detail, but shall point briefly to a few parallels, the first being that of the definite separation of Faust (Hans) from the guardianship and companionship of Mephistopheles (Settembrini).

This occurs in Goethe's work at the point where the two, Mephistopheles and his pupil, arrive before the figure of the Sphinx; not the great Egyptian Sphinx, but the Greek: its forepart, the head and bust of a beautiful human female; its rear, a lithe animal form. Mephistopheles, attracted to the animal aspect, turns in that direction and goes thereafter his own way among all the leading half-animal freaks of the ancient pantheon: sirens, lamias, the vampire Empusa, and the rest, ending finally with three old grey hags having but one tooth and one eye between them; whereas Faust, turning to the human, personal aspect of the challenging symbol of the riddle of life, is led by a succession of guides to the chamber of that very one whose face (in the poet Marlowe's words) "launched a thousand ships and burnt the topless towers of Ilium." In *The Magic Mountain* the ways of the two go apart at the base-line of their experiences of the allure and mystery of love's body: Settembrini with his Latin eye for the girls and Hans with his sense of a mystery through which he would learn of the wonder of life.

The critical episode occurred when Dr. Behrens invited Hans with his cousin to the x-ray laboratory of the sanatorium. Not the light-world of Settembrini's order of reason, but darkness here would be the medium of illumination. "We must first wash our eyes in darkness," Behrens said, "and get cat's eyes" (Madame Chau*chat's* eyes!). He let Hans view his cousin's whole chest at the fluoroscope and, after that, his own hand—where he looked, as it were, into his own grave. "Spooky, what?" remarked the doctor. "My God!" said Hans in awe. "I see!" And he had indeed seen and realized something deeper about the Sphinx-enigma of death in life and life in death than the clarity of Settembrini's thinking ever would have taught him.

His next adventure occurred when Behrens invited him to his rooms for a talk, where a portrait hung of Clavdia. It was not a very good portrait, painted by the doctor himself, but good enough to excite Hans to a detailed examination of its qualities. The two sat down to coffee, ground from a coffee-mill apparently of Indian manufacture, bearing an erotic ornamentation which, when Hans took it in, made him blush. The doctor was descanting upon the advantage to his art of his knowledge of anatomy. "If a man knows a bit," said he, "about what goes on under the epidermis, it helps." And Hans, significantly stirred, with his eyes attempting to penetrate the paint of Clavdia's lightly veiled bosom, resolved then and there to improve his time during the sanatorium rest-hours by a regimen of readings in the science of anatomy, to learn, like Behrens, something of the mysteries to be known beneath Clavdia's interesting epidermis.

In Goethe's *Faust,* when the hero in quest of Helen of Troy has, at the Sphinx, separated from Mephistopheles, he is met by the centaur Chiron (teacher of many heroes of Antiquity), who conducts him to the goddess Manto (daughter of the god of medicine, Aesculapius), who, as patroness of all mystic wisdom, points him to Persephone's realm. In *The Magic Mountain* Behrens plays the role in this scene of Chiron, turning Hans from the unsubstantial rhetoric of Settembrini's political lore to the life-wisdom and world-wisdom of the sciences. Beginning with anatomy, probing the epidermis for its treasures beneath—the oil glands, sweat glands,—coursing of the lymph, etc.—the fascinated student is led on from the laws of Clavdia's interesting form to those of nature in general, organic and then physical, to astronomy, physics, and the universe: all in amplification of his initial interest in Clavdia's bosom, lightly veiled. Which leads him, finally, to a consideration of the mystery of death and dying. In his conversation with Behrens he had asked to know what caused decomposition. "Oxidation," he had been told. Then he asked to know what gave life, and again heard, "Oxidation." So what is the difference? he asked; and Dr. Behrens answered, "Form! Life is that which in the process of changing matter holds its form." Corruption follows from the loss of form. And Hans, with Clavdia's form on his mind, held his ruminating eye to her picture.

The title of the chapter of Hans' early conversations with Settembrini is "Encyclopaedics"; that of his talk with Behrens, "Humaniora"; the chapter of his avid readings, "Researches"; and that of his visits to the bedsides of the moribunds in this Mountain Court, "The Dance of Death." Then comes the great chapter of his meeting with Lady Lust, Lady Beauty, the goddess of his stay up here, corresponding to Goethe's Act III of *Faust*, "The marriage of Faust and Helen." Mann titled his own scene "Walpurgisnacht." The occasion was a party at carnival time, when the basic health-rules of the institution were for one evening disregarded. Everybody was in festival dress, and when Clavdia in a simple, modest, black frock appeared with her white arms bare to the shoulders, Hans (like little Herr Friedmann of yore) had to catch his breath: "Mein Gott! Mein Gott!" he murmured.

A blindfold-game was instituted, the aim, to try to draw a pig blindfold. (We are exactly in Circe's isle.) And as Goethe's Faust was guided to Helen's palace by a magical key held in hand, so here, when it came time for Hans to attempt to draw, he turned directly to Clavdia for a pencil. "Eh! Ingegnere! Aspetti! Che cosa fa!" called Settembrini in dire warning. Hans addressed her even with "du": "Hast du nicht vielleicht einen Bleistift?" She answered partly in French. And when the company, later, had dispersed, game and evening ended, he went down to her on his knees, a little drunk, altogether undone, and like little Herr Friedmann to the woman by the running stream, threw himself (with better luck this time, however) on her mercy. In a curious Germanic French he told of his rapture in the wonder of her feverish mortal body, the symmetry of its white shoulders, hips, breasts, and ribs arranged in pairs, the delicacy of her backbone, and so on. . ."Le corps, l'amour, la mort. . . ," he prayed. And she, wearing for the saturnalian occasion a little three-cornered paper hat, like a child, set this on his head, and rising to go, called softly back, "N'oubliez pas de me rendre mon crayon."

That is the end of Volume I, chronicling the variously dangerous, comical adventure of Hans from his flatland home to the mountain-palace of King Death, spurning the warnings of a concerned pedagogue, and coming to the very threshold and chamber of the Mountain Queen.

"Well, Engineer," said Settembrini, some weeks later, "how did the pomegranate taste? Those who have eaten the fruit of the underworld don't often return."

"Carducci, Latini, Humani, Spaghetti," thought Hans, "disappear!"

Volume II would be of his inward-turning and assimilation of what had been learned. Clavdia had departed for a visit to the flatland. He had returned the pencil and acquired thereby an x-ray portrait of her chest and infected lungs. He was now an old-timer, at home in the timelessness and irresponsibility of just-one-day-after-another. April had come, and it was about this time that Settembrini introduced him to the second of the two educators whom Thomas Mann had had in mind when first conceiving this work. We have already met and learned to enjoy the first: Satana, Settembrini, a scion of the light, the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. The second, now, whose name is Naphta, is a Jew, a Jesuit and Communist: a compendium of the whole history of that other, righteously authoritarian, heretic-burning line of our mixed heritage, standing not for persuasive reason, but the authority of an incontestable sanctified Book of one kind or another. Mann's model for this figure was the Marxist theoretician Gyorgy Lukacs, whose nimble changes of position to fit the line of whatever Communist clique chanced to be currently in the saddle enabled him to survive through years one Party purge after another. (Mann himself had helped rescue Lukacs from Budapest in 1929, when the times had changed quicker than he, and Lukacs, in turn, in 1949, back safely in Budapest, brought forth an appreciative study of Thomas Mann.) In *The Magic Mountain,* Naphta is described as small and thin, of a piercing, corrosive ugliness, with a large hooked nose dominating his hard tight mouth, and pale eyes behind thick glasses. He was always excellently tailored in dark-blue flannel and dwelt in rented rooms in town above the shop of a ladies' tailor, by name, Lukacek.

Almost a quarter of the novel is given over to the philosophical and sociological arguments—for days and years—of these two irrepressible talkers: Joachim and Hans between them, listening now with this ear, now that. And there was much that Hans learned from each;

from Settembrini, the rhetoric of reason, and from Naphta, of the reign of death. "Not liberation and development of the individual are the secret and requirement of this present age," Naphta once declared to the assembled group. "What it needs, what it yearns for, and what it will create for itself is—the Terror." And then directly to Settembrini:

"Is your English economic liberalism unaware of the existence of a school of social thought which represents the human victory over economic thinking, and of which both the fundamentals and the aims correspond precisely to those of the Christian City of God? The Church Fathers called 'mine' and 'thine' pernicious words, and private property, theft and usurpation. They repudiated personal possessions because, according to the God-given law of Nature, this earth is common to all men and brings forth its fruits for the general use. They taught that it is only avarice, a consequence of the Fall, which has put forward the rights of property and created private ownership. They were humane enough, anti-commercial enough, to call economic activity of any sort whatsoever a danger to the soul's salvation—which is to say: a danger to humanity. They hated money and finance, and called capitalistic wealth the burning point of the fire of Hell. . . . And now: after centuries of disregard, all these economic principles and criterions are being resurrected in the modern movement of Communism. The agreement is complete, even to the point of the claim to world dominion made by International Labor against international business and finance; the world proletariat is today opposing to the capitalistic corruption of the bourgeoisie the ideal of humanity and criterion of the City of God. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat, this politico-economic means to salvation proper to our age, does not intend to dominate for its own sake and for all time, but only in the way of a temporary annulment of the opposition of Spirit and Force in the Sign of the Cross: in the sense of overcoming the World by the means of World Mastery, in the sense of transition, transcendence, the Kingdom. The Proletariat has taken up again the work of Gregory the Great, his zeal for God dwells in it, and no less than he will it withhold its hand from blood. Its task is to strike fear into hearts for the redemption of the world and the gaining, at last, of the Redeemer's goal, the stateless, classless condition of man as the Child of God."

When I first read this statement, half a century ago, it seemed to me a madman had been pictured. Today, on the other hand, I see only a normal campus-intellectual spouting Marcuse.

But Settembrini's own revolution also had known something of the politics of terror. Hans, by accident one day, had mispronounced his name in such a way as to suggest the word "September": there is in French a word, *septembrisades,* referring to the "September" massacres of the French Revolution (1792), when the aristocrats in the Paris jails were all mercilessly slaughtered. Ironically, too, Settembrini was a Free Mason, so that, in spite of all his fine talk about spiritual freedom and the individual, there was in his own background a hidden tradition of oaths of secrecy and obedience, mystic orders, oriental symbols and ritual hocus-pocus. On learning of this from Naphta, Hans was amazed.

And so it came to pass, after he had been listening with both ears for a good quarter of the novel to these two contending men of words, that he went forth alone, one winter afternoon, on skis, impelled by he knew not what. And sliding along not skillfully, he began to be overtaken by fatigue. There was an abandoned hut ahead, he made for it and, standing, leaning hard against it, took a sip from a flask of porter that he had brought along, which, however, instead of giving him strength, put him to sleep, still standing on his skis; and he dreamed there a marvelous dream.

It was of a Mediterranean landscape, where beautiful people moved harmoniously among trees and Classical buildings: children, people young and old, dancing, strolling, riding horses, and the like, with a noble dignity that drew from his heart the exclamation, "Oh lovely, lovely!"

Then, however, he turned and behind him saw another scene—of horror: a dark temple wherein were two grey old hags, tearing in dreadful silence a child apart. He was appalled.

Now in Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* there is an almost identical scene symbolizing, at the end of the work, the balance in Classical tragedy of Apollonian beauty and Dionysian horror; and I could only wonder, when this identity first struck me, how conscious Thomas Mann might have been of the similarity when he wrote this. I had the good fortune to know at that time a lady very close to the Mann family, Mrs. Eugene Meyer, one of whose daughters had been a student of mine here at Sarah Lawrence. Mann himself, at the time, was in Princeton. That was in 1941. And so on one occasion I asked Mrs. Meyer what she knew of this: whether Mann had possibly not realized how closely, in this scene in which the whole experience of the novel culminated, he was following Friedrich Nietzsche. She answered with a look of real interest: "When I see Tommy next, I'll ask him." And a week later there came in the mail the following note, which I have kept as my principal treasure of those years.

"Showed him the passage toward the end of the *Geburt [The Birth of Tragedy]* upon which his vision is so obviously based. He was struck dumb with surprise: had forgotten it entirely and probably wrote the whole version without consciously recalling where he got it. Interesting!"

There have been, of course, in the history of literature and art quite a number of instances of such unconscious acts of recall. Cryptomnesia, "hidden memory," the phenomenon is called, and Carl Jung, in his first important paper, "On the Psychology of So-called Occult Phenomena" (published in 1902, four years before he met Freud), produced an example from the writings of Nietzsche himself. "The brain," he stated in a second article on the subject, "never forgets any impression, no matter how slight. . . . Consciousness, on the other hand, operates with an unending loss of previous impressions. . . . Under special conditions the re-emergence of old memory traces with photographic fidelity is by no means impossible. . . . The work of genius fetches up these distant fragments in order to build them into a new and meaningful structure."*

Hans woke with a start from his sight of the horrible hags, but the spell of the earlier scene was still upon him and he thought—using a term, *Homo Dei,* that he had first heard from Naphta's lips: Man, *Homo Dei,* is the lord both of death and of life. He alone is noble, not they. More noble than life is the piety of his heart; more noble than death, the freedom of his thought. And love, not reason, is stronger than death. Love, not reason, gives gentle thoughts. And not reason but love and gentleness render form, form and civilization, in silent recognition of the feast of blood.

So now, having with that dream and thought transcended all the verbalizations of his two literary pedagogues, Hans, in the remainder of his days up there, was to be furnished two examples of his discovered hero, *Homo Dei.* The first would be his cousin Joachim, who, like Naphta, was vowed to an iron discipline, a life, as Hans playfully phrased it, of "poverty, chastity, and obedience." Unlike the other's dedication, however, the soldier's—though also under the sign of death—was to the ends of life in *this* world. His silent presence,

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**C. G. Jung,* "Cryptomnesia," *Collected Works, Vol. I, pp. 103–105.*

always beside his cousin, inspired their nickname, Castor and Pollux: of which mythic pair, it will be recalled, Castor (Castorp) was the mortal brother, Pollux (Joachim), the immortal. And one of the most moving chapters of the novel is that in which this noble, soldierly young man does indeed pass to immortality. Like Hans, he had been smitten by the exotic glamor of a young Russian woman on the Mountain. However, unlike Hans, he had retained his discipline. Unlike Hans, he did not let go, renouncing his duties to the flatland, but was so impatient for his career that he left before his cure was ended—only to have to return, to be put to bed, and to die. His body had won against his manly spirit; or, as Hans could not but wonder: "Had it not been perhaps the form of Marusya that had brought him back; so that it was, rather, his heart that had won?" There is a moral here—the main moral of the book; namely, that in yielding to the allure of his noble heart, the Man of God may fare better and more truly to Wisdom than through honoring hard and fixed rules.

The second example of the features of *Homo Dei* that Hans was to experience appeared with the return to the mountain of his goddess. She was, one day, already in the dining room and the door had not slammed—because caught behind her and closed quietly by a robust but lean, white-haired gentlemen who accompanied her to her table and there took his place by her side: Mynheer Peeperkorn, by name, a Dutch coffee-planter from the Indies, a truly marvelous character, of imposing presence and great mobility of gesture, but never a finished sentence: quite a change, in fact, from the arguing pair whom Hans, through all these months and years, had been studiously heeding. Peeperkorn, in short, was a personality, and his talk was fascinating rather as an expression of himself in play than as a reference to some valuable thought. And the amusing scene through which the wonder of this culminating symbolic figure of the novel is displayed is of an incongruous picnic, to which he had invited an assortment of seven guests, including Settembrini and Naphta. He settled them all directly under a waterfall, the great noise of which made conversation impossible; and with that, of course, the two educators were wiped out. Nature took over and the exhilarated company, moving closer to the great cascade, communicated by looks and signs, mouthing unheard vocables of admiration. A few climbed up a rocky path alongside the waterfall, reached a bridge that went across, from which they could look up, then down, and wave to those below; after which they descended by the other side—having gotten nowhere, nowhere at all. Hans in his studies of astronomy had been impressed by the joyous though aimless circling of the planets, and this little round had been of the same kind. The elated company settled to their banquet and when all had been eaten, Peeperkorn, their host, imbibing from a silver cup, suddenly rose and began to speak: raising the cup, pointing to the waterfall, mouthing words nobody could hear. And his speech went on, directed now to one, now to another of the fascinated company, hanging to his unheard eloquence. And he seemed now to be some kind of heathen priest of wine and dance, now the image of the Man of Sorrows. He grandly flourished the cup, drank it down, and waved the party closed.

That is the climax of the book: a sort of Zen koan.

But to move along! The novel ends with a chapter of which the title, "The Thunderbolt," refers to the news of the guns of the First World War. Hans in Switzerland was out of it, and he could have remained up there on his mountain, hermetically sealed away, or he could have entered the fray on the side of Settembrini's politics, of England, Russia, and France. But what, in fact, he decided to do was to enter and participate where his flesh and blood—his birth and his nature—called him. At the opening of the novel, he had been unable to endure even the harmless grind of an office job. Now, on the other hand, after a season of seven years of self-and-life discovery and testing, guided by the mercury of his own temperature through death and corruption to rebirth, he returns to the world as one capable of action out of his own directive center, not simply in reaction to the claims and calls of others. And he accepts life at its worst—at war—in its whole character, that is to say; for life is in fact a battlefield: life lives on life, life kills, life eats. Fire, burning, oxidation, is of its essence. And let me tell you, if you are going to marry someone to change and improve him, better not. Likewise, if you are saying yea to the world to improve it, please, just leave us alone. There is but one way to say yea in love, and that is to affirm what is there. That is true love; and as Paul says, "Love bears all things."

III

And so now, in conclusion, let me return to that festival occasion of Thomas Mann's celebration of Freud. Exactly half way through his Saturnalian talk he let fall the unutterable name; he named Jung. He protected himself by referring to the man as an "ungrateful scion of the Freudian school," which he must have known was untrue. Jung never studied under Freud, but was himself an authority on the psychology of schizophrenia when he met Freud in 1907, at the age of 32, and was immediately appointed Permanent President of the International Psychoanalytic Association. Moreover, it was not Jung who broke with Freud, but Freud who broke with Jung, when he realized that the younger man's psychology could never be identified with his own. Freud interpreted dreams as allegorical distortions of repressed infantile wishes, and when, in *Totem and Tabu,* he extended this view to the interpretation of myths and rites, he again looked back to infancy—now the infancy of the race—to explain the reference of their symbols. Jung, on the other hand, saw myth as symbolic, finally, not of occurrences in the past, but of the structures and powers of the psyche and consequently antecedent to history; and Mann saw them this way, too. Moreover, certain dreams (which Jung called "big dreams") might be interpreted, according to this view, as transcending personal experience and biography, pointing in the way of revelations to the great transpersonal mysteries of life and death, being, non-being, phenomenality and the like. The deep dream of Thomas Buddenbrook, after his dip into Schopenhauer, was a dream of this mythic sort, not to be read in Freudian terms—and not read by Mann in Freudian terms. Again, still more impressively, Hans Castorp's dream in the snow, which Mann (by cryptomnesia) had taken from Nietzsche, was interpreted by Mann himself, not in Freudian style, but Jungian. So it is no wonder that when he had progressed in his talk to a discussion of *Joseph and His Brothers* it was to Jung that he had finally to refer.

Mann spoke of Jung as providing a bridge between occidental thought and oriental esoteric, and launched then into an open attack on Freud for his ignorance of philosophy and overestimation of his own science. All that science can do, Mann declared, is to write the Q.E.D. to some philosophical proposition; and those that Freud had demonstrated, whether knowingly or unknowingly, were of the great German Romantics: Novalis, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and so on; whereas Jung had enlarged on the insights of such thinkers through his understanding not only of oriental esoteric lore but also of the Greek and Egyptian hermetic mysteries. Schopenhauer's proposition, which Freud had scientifically demonstrated, that what happens to one is actually of one's own doing, Jung had recognized as already announced in the Tibetan *Book of the Dead*. . . . And from this point on, for the next two pages of his fifteen page oration, Mann is quoting, nearly word for word, from Jung's important commentary on that text.*

Not only is what happens to one the effect, (à la Freud) of one's own doing, but the world itself, as man knows it, is "given" by the nature of man's organs of knowledge. The psyche is the "giver" of the "given," i.e. the possibilities of experience; and among the "given"—as the East well knows—are the gods. Ergo: the soul, the human psyche, is the ultimate radiant godhead, transcendent of all such categories of temporal experience as I and Thou, This and That, Subject and Object. The soul itself is the giver of what is "known" as "God."

Such an idea, however, states Mann (quoting Jung), is intolerable to the occidental religious sense, even though certain Christian mystics have recognized and proclaimed it; Angelus Silesius, for example, where he declares:

I know that without me
God could not one moment be;
Were I destroyed, then he
Would disappear instantly.

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*C. G. *Jung*, "Psychological Commentary on *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*," *Collected Works*, Vol. 11, pp. 509–526; the precise passages from which Mann is quoting will be found, pp. 513–514.

Such an alignment of God with the soul is *not* the same as Freud's idea of God as a projection into the universe of an infantile father-image. God is *not* an illusion here, to be explained away, but a symbol pointing beyond itself to the realization of a mystery of at-one-ment. What is here referred to is *not* to be discovered at the end of a "pudendascope" (as James Joyce names Freud's psychology), but is antecedent to all categories (even Sigmund Freud's) of thought and research.

Nor is it compatible with the Biblical notion of God as a kind of fact, a personality (or, as Ernst Haeckel once quipped, a "gaseous vertebrate"), who in some distant past, the infancy of the race, appeared to certain Hebrews and arranged with them a Covenant. Mann alludes respectfully to this imagined prehistoric event and then proceeds to elucidate, in the final third of his lecture, the method by which in his *Joseph* novels he has dealt with it; namely, in such a way as to accord with both the Jungian approach and the Freudian, the oriental-mystical and the Hebrew-pseudo-historical in such a way (as he declares) that "the concept of the soul as 'giver of the given' reaches an ironic pitch not authorized either in oriental wisdom or in psychological perception." Mann, that is to say, the artist-maker and dreamer of dreams, not given, like Freud, to "useful cognition," but to fantasizing only, had (in his own estimation) surpassed not only both Freud and Jung, but also the prophets and the mystics with his dreamlike ironic affirmation of both terms of the opposition simultaneously. "God's mighty qualities—and thus God Himself," he states in his talk, "are indeed something objective, exterior to Abram; but at the same time they are in him and of him. The power of his own soul is at times scarcely to be distinguished from them, it consciously interpenetrates and fuses with them—and such is the origin of the bond that the Lord then strikes with Abram, as the explicit confirmation of an inward fact."

Having disclosed his Jungian affinities, Mann next gives witness to his Freudian, by citing a recent article in the Freudian journal *Imago*, where the very idea of mythic biography is described which he, for some years already, had been developing in his *Joseph* novels: the idea, that is to say, of an individual life lived consciously on the model of a mythical archetype, and so, incorporating its values. This, in fact, has been an idea fundamental to all traditional cultures. The *Imitatio Christi* of Thomas à Kempis affords an example, and Christ himself, as the Matthew Gospel tells, went into and out of Egypt, spoke in parables, healed the sick, and so on, as prophesied of the Messiah, "so that the Scripture might be fulfilled." Cleopatra identified herself with Isis, Hathor, Ishtar, and Aphrodite. Or the model might be of some historical figure whose life has become legendary. Alexander the Great walked in the footsteps of Miltiades; Caesar imitated Alexander and Napoleon imitated Caesar. "Much that is extra-personal, much unconscious identification, much that is conventional and schematic," declared Mann to the listening company, "is none the less decisive for the experience not only of the artist but of the human being in general." Indeed, every child imitates its parents. And at this point in his discourse Mann was pleased to remark that in the Freudian essay to which he was referring, his own *Joseph* novels had been favorably cited as examples: for, as he next went on to explain, "the 'myth' as lived is the epic idea embodied in my novel; and it is plain to me that when as a novelist I took the step in my subject-matter from the bourgeois and individual to the mythical and typical my personal connection with the analytic field passed into its acute stage."—As indeed it did; for with that, he had passed from the sphere of the Freudian ego and "personal unconscious" to the Jungian, transpersonal, "archetypes of the collective."

Mann's hero, Joseph, played consciously the *imitatio* of that great Mediterranean god of many names discussed by Frazer in *The Golden Bough,* who annually died and was resurrected (Tammuz, Adonis, Attis, Osiris); and since that is the very god whose image lives with us still in the mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ, and is set before us by the Christian Church as the model for us all, Mann was able to ring a great many bells simultaneously as he developed his Joseph theme, pointing both backward to our pre-Christian past, and forward to our present—it being evident, also, that this same fundamental myth had been the model of Hans Castorp's spiritual death and rebirth on the Magic Mountain.

"For the myth," declared Mann, in summation, now clearly much closer to Jung than to Freud, "is the foundation of life; it is the timeless schema, the pious formula into which life flows when it reproduces its traits out of the unconscious. And when a writer has acquired the habit of regarding life as mythical and typical," he continued, "there comes a curious heightening of his artist temper, a new refreshment to his perceiving and shaping powers, such as otherwise occurs only much later in life; for while in the life of the human race the mythical is an early and primitive stage, in the life of the individual it is a late and mature one. What is gained is an insight into the higher truth depicted in the actual; a smiling knowledge of the eternal, the ever-being and authentic; a knowledge of the *schema* in which and according to which the supposed individual lives, unaware, in his naive belief in himself as unique in space and time, of the extent to which his life is but formula and repetition, and his path marked out for him by those who trod it before him."

Well, so much for Thomas Mann's birthday oration in celebration of Freud. Let me conclude my own talk by noting, now, what occurred shortly after 1936.

Asia moved into Europe, with the aid first of Hitler, then, of England, France, and the United States; so that now a good half has been lost of that precious ego-world of the European progressive consciousness which, as Mann has said, has always maintained itself precariously against the overlapping sea of the id and of Asia. The world as it stood in 1936 has been wiped out, and indeed we now have Asia even more intimately among us in our current zeal for Zen, Kibbutzim, Hinduism, Oriental mysticism and meditation. This regressive orientalization is something far more threatening to the civilization Mann stood for than anything he, or anyone else of his generation (except Oswald Spengler), ever imagined. Mann himself soon left Germany and took refuge in the United States, where he set to work immediately writing political speeches to urge our country into the war. And I am sorry to say, but it seems to me all too evident, that his art from that moment declined.

And here I come to a great and final problem; that, namely, of the incompatibility of art and politics.

The first three of Mann's *Joseph* novels had been completed by 1936. The fourth appeared only seven years later, in 1943. And whereas in the earlier works—particularly Volume II, *Young Joseph*, but also Volume III, *Joseph in Egypt*—he had been developing with incredible skill a gorgeous art of mythic resonances, in Volume IV, *Joseph the Provider*, the whole glorious balloon has collapsed to earth. All the wonderful mythic resonances are gone, and we have little more than a masterfully written family narrative telling of how a handsome son, thought dead, made a great success of it in Egypt as psychoanalyst to the Pharaoh, interpreting his dreams, and so found himself in a position to give substantial aid to his old father and numerous brothers when they flocked to the capital city to obtain what we call today "relief."

Mann himself, in his earlier days, had declared that the artist has to lead two lives, between two worlds: one participating in society, where blood and nature bind him, and the other, removed, as artist. "Politicians," Johan Strindberg once said in a statement that Mann himself quotes in his *Observations of a Non-Political Man,* "are one-eyed cats." They see out of this eye, or that, either right or left, and in fact, one cannot live or act without standing for and representing one side or another. However, as artist one is to see with *both* eyes and (as Tonio Kroeger told Lisaveta) to name ruthlessly, yet with affirming love. James Joyce, it is worth remarking, remained loyal throughout to the two-eyed view and his art held firm to the end. However (as we also know), Joyce had never to face quite such an experience as that which unsettled Mann, when his beloved Hans and Ingeborg were transformed under Hitler into what he could only regard as monsters. His love failed him at that point and his art declined.

Can one treat of such things with the balanced vision of an artist? Has a human heart such magnitude? "Love bears all things," Saint Paul has said. "Judge not that you may not be judged," said Christ. The limitation comes where your judgment comes. The revelation of art is not of ethics or a judgment—not even of humanity as one generally thinks of it—but a marveling recognition of the radiant Form of forms that shines through all things; and as our own great American master, Nathanial Hawthorne, has said in a little story called *Fancy's Show Box* (telling of what dreams and fancies show of the innermost truth of us each): "Man shall not disclaim his brotherhood even with the guiltiest."

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